

# Ali Haddad, President, Algerian Business Leaders' Forum (Forum des Chefs d'Entreprise, FCE) : Interview

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## Interview : Ali Haddad

**How can Algeria continue to support the improvement and proliferation of entrepreneurship?**

**ALI HADDAD:** There are two approaches: one is strategic and the other concerns public policy. On the strategic side, Algeria needs to focus on economic diversification, which will lead to a wealth of opportunities for investment and company creation. This approach necessitates involvement in sectors such as agriculture, tourism, industry, new technologies and energy transition. One example of how diversification can boost both entrepreneurship and investments is by promoting agriculture and tourism in the southern region. We have an opportunity to use natural resources like hydrocarbons, ore and solar to accelerate this diversification process, though it needs to be supported by public policies dedicated to entrepreneurship. The legal frameworks and regulations set up in the past few years include a variety of incentives for entrepreneurship and investment; however, these incentives have not had a significant impact on economic operators. It is important to ensure flexibility in the regulations by establishing segment plans that involve all operators.

At the global level, challenges include attending to economic reforms in order to aid local business conditions and accelerating bureaucratic procedures.

**What has been done to expand dialogue in foreign business communities, specifically within Africa?**

**HADDAD:** In recent years the FCE and the business community more broadly have been committed to improving their presence in other countries by participating in international events and exhibitions.

In 2018 several bilateral business councils were established with other countries, 13 permanent delegations were created abroad and conventions were signed with foreign business leaders. In Dakar, Abidjan, Bamako

and other African capitals, we are now able to propose balanced and equally beneficial economic relationships that distinguish our unique approach.

**In what ways might the diaspora help to further stimulate Algerian investments?**

**HADDAD:** Members of our diaspora are involved in many economic, scientific and cultural areas. They also hold positions in high-level management of major industrial and financial services companies, as well as in prominent universities in the areas of humanities, and scientific and technical research.

It is up to the business community to establish appropriate tools that reinforce relationships with nationals. In the era of digital and technological revolution, these tools are diverse and plentiful. We need to focus on mobilising our human resources and unlocking potential financing and expertise that may be leveraged by the economy. Our business community has substantially increased its activities in other countries, and we have received great encouragement from the diaspora to continue developing initiatives and new projects.

**How can incentives be put in place to strengthen foreign direct investment inflows?**

**HADDAD:** Algeria's potential is clearly evident in its geography, resources and market growth. However, there is inadequate familiarity with the incentives in place for investors. The cost of gas, electricity and water are the cheapest in the region; there is increasing focus on professional training; and considerable investments have been made during the last 20 years to improve communication, transport and logistics infrastructure. Investment and commerce regulations have been updated and the constitution encourages the country to work on improving business conditions. Furthermore, the president of the republic has put the private sector forward as a key area for development. There is still progress that must be made in order to enhance overall ease of business and increase openness to foreign investors. This means bolstering sectors with the highest potential for future growth such as renewables, agriculture, mines and construction materials.